

Workshop Report

Title: Climate Change and Human Health: Challenges and Adaptation in Kyrgyzstan

Location & Date: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan | 18–19 August 2025

Convened by: University of Central Asia (UCA), Graduate School of Development

In collaboration with: Aga Khan University (Pakistan)

With support from: Centre for Global Child Health, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), Toronto

1. Purpose and Objectives

The workshops aimed to advance understanding of the impacts of climate change on human health in Kyrgyzstan and the wider Central and South Asia region, an area that remains under-researched despite growing risks. The objectives were to:

- Share emerging research and evidence on climate–health linkages, particularly in mountain contexts;
- Foster dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners;
- Identify priorities for policy-relevant research, data collection, and institutional collaboration;
- Lay the groundwork for sustained regional cooperation on climate and health.

2. Participants and Stakeholder Representation

The events brought together a broad, multi-sectoral group of experts and stakeholders, including representatives from:

Academic and research institutions: University of Central Asia, Aga Khan University (Pakistan), Kyrgyz State Medical Academy, American University of Central Asia, International University in Kyrgyzstan, Osh State University, Talas State University, International Higher School of Medicine, OSCE Academy;

Government and public institutions: National Institute of Public Health under the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic;

International organizations: World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP);

Development organizations and foundations: Aga Khan Foundation.

This diverse participation enabled interdisciplinary exchange and strengthened links between research, policy, and practice.

3. Key Themes and Discussions

Health and Health-Related SDGs

Participants reviewed Kyrgyzstan's progress toward health and health-related Sustainable Development Goals (HHSDGs). UCA presentations highlighted ongoing

national SDG monitoring since 2022 and identified climate change as one of the most critical yet insufficiently addressed determinants of health outcomes.

Environmental Risks and Human Health

Research findings were shared on the health impacts of atmospheric particles from natural and anthropogenic sources, with a focus on vulnerable mountain regions. These studies contribute new evidence on causal pathways linking emissions and health.

Climate Change, Water, and Adaptation

Discussions examined climate change impacts on water availability, water-related health risks, and adaptation challenges in Central Asia. Presentations also highlighted the role of social and behavioral change in climate adaptation and policy-relevant evidence on water scarcity and health risks in Kyrgyzstan.

Policy and Practice Perspectives

An international policy perspective was provided through insights from WHO initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, focusing on integrating climate considerations into health policy and strengthening institutional responses.

Local Perspectives and Rural Livelihoods

The final sessions focused on regional and community-level challenges, including soil carbon and food security, environmental degradation in southern Kyrgyzstan, and the national policy landscape on climate and health.

4. Closed-Door Brainstorming Session (19 August 2025)

A follow-up closed-door meeting convened researchers and development partners to advance a collaborative climate–health research agenda for Central and South Asia. Discussions emphasized:

- Aligning research with national policy priorities;
- Learning from applied research and pilot interventions in Pakistan, including urban heat mitigation, maternal health under extreme heat, mental health in flood-affected areas, and community resilience initiatives;
- Integrating climate and health dimensions into ongoing research on mountain communities;
- Development interventions related to water systems, renewable energy, regenerative agriculture, and low-emission livestock management.

5. Key Messages and Outcomes

- Climate change poses growing and interconnected risks to health, water security, and livelihoods, particularly in mountain regions.
- There is a critical need for stronger data, monitoring, and evidence on climate–health linkages to inform policy and investment decisions.
- Cross-sectoral and regional collaboration is essential to address climate and health challenges effectively.

- The launch of the **Central Asia Climate & Health Network** provides a platform to coordinate research, share evidence, and amplify the region's voice in global climate and health discussions.

6. Next Steps

Participants agreed to explore joint research initiatives, strengthen data collection in mountain contexts, and enhance coordination between national health priorities and regional climate strategies through the newly established network.

